

REMARKS

Claims 9 to 19 are added. The claims now in the application are 1 to 19.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 8 are amended to clarify them.

The amendments to Claims 1 and 8 find obvious support in the claim itself.

The recitation added to Claim 2 that the metal layer of the separator is disposed between the recited non-metal layers finds basis at page 12, in the paragraph at line 5.

The pluralizing of "surfaces" in Claim 2 is grammatically required.

The amendment inserting "carbon" in line 3 of Claim 6 supplies literal antecedent basis for its subsequent recitation.

The remaining amendments to the original claims remove improper multiple dependency.

New Claims 11 to 19 recite the content of the removed multiple dependent claim recitations.

DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgement of receipt of the Japanese priority document is noted. A sworn translation of the document accompanies this response. The item of information recited at page 4, in the paragraph at line 8, is herewith resubmitted as an IDS.

In view of the removal of improper multiple dependency, by the subject amendment, the stated objection to Claims 4 to 8 would appear to be overcome.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al., U.S. Patent 6,383,678 in view of Gyoten et al., U.S. Patent 6,372,373 are requested.

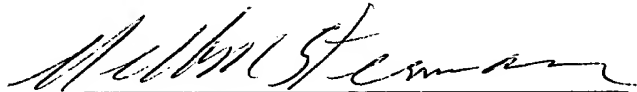
The priority date to which Applicant is entitled is January 21, 1999, as is evidenced by the submission herewith of the sworn translation of the priority document.

The earliest prior art date in respect to the subject application of the Kaneko et al. patent relied upon is December 1, 1999. That of the Gyoten et al. patent is April 16, 1999. Both of those dates are subsequent to Applicants' priority date. The attached Derwent abstracts support these statements. Hence, the disclosures of the two documents are not prior art as to the subject claims. Accordingly the stated rejection is overcome.

Favorable reconsideration is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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